

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 357

By Burchett

A RESOLUTION to honor the Reverend William (Bill)L. Couch, Jr., for his forty years of service in the ministry, and to congratulate him upon his much-deserved retirement.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is proud to specially recognize and honor inspirational Tennessee ministers, who faithfully serve God, their congregations, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend William (Bill) L. Couch, Jr., who currently serves the Lutheran Campus Ministries in Knoxville, is one such servant of the Lord, who will retire this year after forty praiseworthy years in the ministry; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Couch graduated from the Concordia Theological Seminary in 1963; he completed postgraduate training in the Master's Program in Social Work Administration at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, as well as in Substance Abuse Counseling; and

WHEREAS, upon his graduation from Concordia Theological Seminary, he began to serve the Bethel Lutheran Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas; he led the faithful at that church for five years; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Couch has also served the good congregations of the Metro Campus Ministry in Memphis and St. John's Lutheran Church in Seward, Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, he has been the minister of the Lutheran Campus Ministries for 29 blessed years, and he leaves a wonderful congregation filled with both joy and sorrow at his retirement; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his many years of faithful service to several congregations, Reverend Couch has served on the District Board of Directors, as Chairman of the District Department of Youth, and on the District Evangelism Committee; and

WHEREAS, he has also served as Synod Circuit Counselor and Synod Reconciler, as well as Pastoral Advisor for the Mid-South District Walther League; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Couch is an active and important part of his community and his profession, lending his support to numerous organizations, including the Tennessee Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, which he has served on the Board of Directors; the Lutheran Services of Tennessee, which he has served as Chairman of the Board of Directors; and the Knoxville Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Commission, which he served as Vice-Chair; and

WHEREAS, he also contributes his time and numerous talents as a hymn text and tune writer, the author of many published articles, and an instructor of Biblical courses; and

WHEREAS, as Chair of the Campus Ministers Council, Reverend Couch was instrumental in setting up a residence hall ministry, as well as a hospital chaplaincy program, to better-serve the needs of students; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, he has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues and his congregations; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Couch has been blessed with a wonderful family: his wife of forty-two years, Ruth; four children: son, Reverend Mark Thomas, and daughters, Rebekah Ruth Behnke, Sarah Elizabeth Dew, and Rachel Renee Smith; and six grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, throughout his forty years of service in the ministry, the Reverend William (Bill) L. Couch has created and nurtured a community of service to God, and has earned the utmost gratitude from many wonderful congregations; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Couch exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to the Reverend William (Bill) L. Couch our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.